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At the Sign of the Angel: The influence of Andrew Wise on Shakespeare in print

Amy Lidster

In his address to the ‘Gentlemen Readers’, prefacing the first edition of *Tamburlaine* (Part 1 and 2) in 1590, stationer Richard Jones positions himself as an active reader and editor, drawing attention to the ways in which he has transformed Marlowe’s plays as they were performed on stage and adapted them to suit a projected image of his reading public:

I haue (purposely) omitted and left out some fond and friuolous Jestures, digressing (and in my poore opinion) far vnmeet for the matter, which I thought, might seeme more tedious vnto the wise, than any way els to be regarded, though (happly) they haue bene of some vaine conceited fondlings greatly gaped at, what times they were shewed vpon the stage.¹

This preface, which was the first paratextual address to be attached to a professional playbook, points to the significant role stationers could have in selecting works for publication, controlling their transmission as editors, expressing interpretations of the texts, and reshaping the plays that were performed on stage.² Prior to 1590, plays from the commercial theatre were rarely published. The small number of dramatic texts reaching print during the 1580s was dominated by translations, academic plays, closet plays, and accounts of royal entertainments, with, however, the plays of John Lyly forming the most notable exception.³ In many ways, Richard Jones’s publication of Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* and Robert Wilson’s *Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* in 1590 can be seen as a significant turning point in the emerging

¹ Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine* (1590), A2r.

² The terms ‘professional’ and ‘commercial’ are used throughout this article to refer to plays that were performed by adult and boys’ companies in front of paying audiences.

³ The first plays from the professional stage were published in 1584: Robert Wilson’s *Three Ladies of London* from Leicester’s Men, George Peele’s *The Arraignement of Paris* from the Children of the Chapel, and several of John Lyly’s plays for the Children of the Chapel and the Children of Paul’s, including two editions of *Sappho and Phao*, and three editions of *Campaspe*. These first playbooks were followed by the anonymous *Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* in 1589.

market for printed playbooks. The prefatory address in *Tamburlaine* positions professional plays as worthy of attention from ‘Gentlemen Readers’, while also suggesting a separation between the play in performance and as a printed text, effected by the intervention of stationers. Even at this nascent stage in the development of a market for commercial playbooks, stationers display and assert their agency, as opposed to assuming a functional role of impartial transmission from stage to page, and often prioritize, as suggested by Jones’s marketing strategy, the play’s new status as a book for readers, as distinct from its theatrical existence.

One of the most important early publishers of Shakespeare’s plays was Andrew Wise, who was responsible for eleven separate play editions between 1597 and 1602. Starting in 1597 with the first editions of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, Wise’s quartos usher in the first notable publication concentration of plays by Shakespeare. From his bookshop location at the Sign of the Angel in Paul’s Churchyard, Wise published and distributed editions of *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (the last two published jointly with William Aspley): he invested in the plays, entered all of them in the Stationers’ Register, and hired printers, including Peter Short, Valentine Simmes, Simon Stafford, and Thomas Creede, to manufacture the physical texts.⁴ Judging by the number of second and subsequent editions, Wise’s quartos proved phenomenally successful with early readers – indeed, they were the first of Shakespeare’s plays to be reprinted.⁵ Between 1597 and 1602, *Richard II*, *Richard III* and *1 Henry IV* were each published three times, and *2 Henry IV* and *Much Ado About Nothing*

⁴ Wise is unique in entering all of his plays in the Stationers’ Register prior to publication: *Richard II* was entered on 29 August 1597, *Richard III* on 20 October 1597, *1 Henry IV* on 25 February 1598, and *2 Henry IV* and *Much Ado About Nothing* were entered jointly to Wise and William Aspley on 23 August 1600.

⁵ *Richard II* and *Richard III*, published in their second quarto editions in 1598, were the first of Shakespeare’s plays to be reprinted (if Q2 of *The Taming of a Shrew* in 1596 is not considered as part of Shakespeare’s oeuvre).

were printed once, making a total of eleven editions in under five years.⁶ By the end of the sixteenth century, largely as a result of these quartos, Shakespeare was the most published professional dramatist, having approximately twenty-two play editions in circulation, about half of which had been published by Wise.⁷

The importance of these editions to Shakespeare studies and early modern drama has been regularly acknowledged, especially as these quartos are often used as the copy texts for modern editions. However, the significance of Andrew Wise and his publishing strategies and connections are frequently overlooked.⁸ This article aims to suggest that Wise contributed both to the selection of these plays for publication and to their printed presentation, specifically in relation to paratextual attributions, which are included on his title pages from 1598 onwards. Both of these aspects are particularly significant: the process of selection has considerably defined the corpus of extant plays from the commercial theatres, as well as our understanding of wider theatrical repertoires, and the introduction of authorial attribution helped to elevate Shakespeare's status and reputation as a professional dramatist at the end of the sixteenth century, influencing later publishing ventures, such as the First Folio. Profiling Wise's involvement in play selection and presentation, this discussion will draw attention to two

⁶ Wise published *Richard II* in 1597 (Q1), 1598 (Q2) and 1598 (Q3); *Richard III* in 1597 (Q1), 1598 (Q2) and 1602 (Q3); *1 Henry IV* in 1598 (Q1, for which only one sheet survives), 1598 (Q2) and 1599 (Q3); *2 Henry IV* in 1600 (Q1), and *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1600 (Q1).

⁷ The twenty-two editions of plays by Shakespeare excludes, in this count, *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (1591), *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594, 1596), *Arden of Faversham* (1592), *Lochrine* (1595), and *Edward III* (1596, 1599). In comparison, plays from Shakespeare's contemporaries had achieved significantly fewer editions by the end of the sixteenth century. As Lukas Erne has shown, John Lyly was the next most published dramatist on the basis of edition numbers, with thirteen separate editions printed by 1600, followed by George Peele and Robert Greene with eight editions each, Marlowe with seven, and Kyd with six. See Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 44.

⁸ For recent studies that highlight Wise's importance, see Sonia Massai's chapter on 'The Wise Quartos' in *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 91-105, and Adam Hooks's discussion of Wise and Thomas Playfere in *Selling Shakespeare: Biography, Bibliography and the Book Trade* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 66-98.

contributing factors: the influence of the geography of London's book trade, specifically Wise's business location at the Sign of the Angel in St Paul's Churchyard, and the role of patronage associations in the publication of Shakespeare's plays. An assessment of commercial and patronage agendas will serve to challenge the separation that is often maintained between these two areas of influence, both of which can be seen as fashioning Shakespeare's position as a published dramatist at the end of the sixteenth century.⁹

Having a wider degree of application, the practices and connections of Andrew Wise will help to demonstrate that the publication of professional plays was not arbitrary, but involved a highly motivated process of selection; it was not representative, but focused on narrow groupings of plays that supported a variety of literary and political agendas; and the plays themselves were not simply transmitted, but transformed through their publication.¹⁰ Through this approach, the printed playbook emerges not as a record of a performance event, but as a text displaying traces of multiple producers that shed light on the literary, theatrical, and political contexts which mediate our access to the plays that were once performed on the early modern stage.

'Taking pleasure in reading Histories': The selection of Shakespeare's plays for publication

Jones's prefatory address in *Tamburlaine* highlights his understanding of readers' interests, or at least constitutes an attempt to generate them, describing his prospective buyers as 'taking pleasure in reading Histories' (A2r). While the fluidity of the term 'history' precludes specific

⁹ Critics who have drawn attention to the interconnections between aristocratic and commercial agents include Kathleen McLuskie, Helen Smith, and Adam Hooks. In particular, see Hooks, 'Shakespeare at the White Greyhound', *Shakespeare Survey* 64 (2011), 260-75.

¹⁰ On the transformative nature of publication and its politics, see Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication* (Cambridge, 2004).

identification in subject matter, as the term suggests both material related to an acknowledged 'past' (including chronicle sources) or the more expansive application of retelling a 'story' or account, its use here is chiefly interesting for what it indicates about a publisher's concentration and effort to select material that will appeal to readers. As the individuals carrying the financial risk of their ventures, publishers actively chose which texts to invest in, and while the availability of plays from the professional theatres inevitably shaped print opportunities and patterns, publishers still asserted a considerable degree of influence in positively selecting which available plays to pursue in anticipation of finding a responsive readerly market.¹¹

Andrew Wise's playbooks form a remarkably unified group: all of his dramatic publications consist of plays by Shakespeare that were part of the repertory of the Chamberlain's Men, and focus on the lives of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English monarchs, with the exception of *Much Ado About Nothing* (one of Wise's last publications which, in collaboration with William Aspley, perhaps indicates a change in publishing strategy that accords more closely with Aspley's interests).¹² All of these plays reached the bookstalls in their first editions between 1597 and 1600, a rapidity that draws attention to Wise's concentration in both dramatist and subject matter. Such an emphasis is unusual at this stage in the publication of professional plays, suggesting Wise occupies a unique position in the London book trade and warrants more

¹¹ As critics such as Peter Blayney have demonstrated, stationers purchased play scripts from manuscript owners and, while such owners could seek out a particular stationer, the decision to invest remained with the publishers, who would make choices based on their wider publishing strategies and output. While some writers developed close relationships with certain stationers (as in the case of Samuel Daniel and Simon Waterson) and occasionally invested in the publication of their texts themselves, this pattern is not especially widespread, particularly during the early stages of playbook publication, and instead it is the agency of the stationer that is centralized in the final selection of texts. See Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks', in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by John Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York, 1993), 383-422.

¹² Aspley would go on to publish several comedies, notably those from the boys' companies, including Marston's *The Malcontent* (1604) and Chapman, Jonson, and Marston's *Eastward Ho* (1605).

sustained critical attention. Other stationers were investing in plays at this time, but none privileged historical subject matter in their selection of texts, and none displayed the same focus on one dramatist or company. Cuthbert Burby, for example, published Lyly's *Mother Bombe* from the Children of Paul's in 1594 and 1598, Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* from the Chamberlain's Men in 1598, and Greene's *Orlando Furioso* in 1594 and 1599 (which had probably been independently performed by the Queen's Men, the Admiral's Men, and Lord Strange's Men), demonstrating a publishing interest in plays from a range of dramatists and companies.

Wise's specialism in plays dramatizing the lives of medieval English monarchs may be connected to the location of his bookshop in Paul's Cross at the Sign of the Angel, an area in the north-east corner of St Paul's Churchyard which witnessed a concentration of publications dealing with medieval English history during the late 1590s, perhaps most significantly, Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars* (1595). Focusing on the reigns of Richard II through Edward IV (in its later continuations), and the conflicts between the 'houses of Lancaster and Yorke', *The Civil Wars* was immensely influential, and its impact, as John Pitcher argues, 'was felt throughout the literary scene at once'.¹³ Stationer Simon Waterson published the majority of Daniel's works (including *The Civil Wars*), and the location of his bookshop at the Sign of the Crown was in the same part of the churchyard as Wise's business (with less than 200 feet separating them).¹⁴ Given the proximity of the bookshops and the frequency of Waterson's influential editions, Wise would have been aware of the success of Daniel's works. In 1595, Waterson had published two editions of *The Civil Wars*, containing the 'First Fowre Bookes';

¹³ John Pitcher, 'Daniel, Samuel (1562/3-1619),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), para. 7 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7120>, accessed 10 February 2017]

¹⁴ See Peter Blayney, *The Bookshops in Paul's Cross Churchyard*, Occasional Papers of the Bibliographical Society, No. 5 (London, 1990), p. 76.

a fifth book was then printed separately in an undated edition, but was also bound as an attachment to the four books; and in 1599, Waterson published the five books as part of *The Poeticall Essayes of Samuel Daniel*. Judging by his dramatic rendering of similar material in *Richard II*, Shakespeare was one of the early readers of Daniel's *Civil Wars*, likely drawing on the first four books within weeks of their publication, probably in November 1595.¹⁵ The depth, subtlety, and inwardness of Daniel's historical characters, the added significance and maturity of Queen Isabel that departs from the chronicle sources, and the emphasis on the two central competitors, Richard and Bolingbroke, can be seen as informing Shakespeare's treatment of the same material. This connection between Shakespeare's dramatic representations and Daniel's *Civil Wars* possibly encouraged Wise's interest in these particular plays by Shakespeare, as he attempted to capitalize on the position of *The Civil Wars* as one of the most reprinted and influential works published in this part of Paul's Churchyard during the late 1590s.

Moreover, the ensuing success of Wise's quartos (with nine editions by 1600) may have, reciprocally, motivated the expansions to *The Civil Wars*. Waterson was instrumental in the development of *The Civil Wars*, and it was at his request, in about 1600, that Daniel provided him with another continuation: in 1601-02, Waterson published *The Works of Samuel Daniel*, containing six books of *The Civil Wars*.¹⁶ Waterson was clearly aware of the consumer demand for Daniel's narrative poem and the reading public's wider interests in medieval English monarchs and their battles (as featured in Wise's editions), while also recognizing Daniel's literary reputation and connections to the Sidney circle, which could benefit his own position as a publisher and make the continuations profitable. Other texts dealing with similar subject

¹⁵ Pitcher, 'Daniel, Samuel', para. 7.

¹⁶ Pitcher, 'Daniel, Samuel', para. 11.

matter were also published during this time, including Michael Drayton's *Mortimeriados* (1596, later published as *The Barrons Wars* in 1603) and *Englands Heroicall Epistles* (1597), Richard Crompton's *The Mansion of Magnanimitie* (1599), John Hayward's *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie IIII* (1599), the anonymous *First Booke of the Preservation of King Henry VII* (1599), and John Speed's *A Description of the Civill Warres of England* (1601), which indicate the emergence of a minor literary trend in late-medieval monarchical history at the end of the sixteenth century, with Wise's numerous editions occupying a significant position within these publication patterns.

While the close proximity of Wise's and Waterson's bookshops and the connection of Shakespeare's plays to Daniel's *Civil Wars* may have appealed to Wise's business strategies, the question of the availability of these plays must be addressed. Publishers were limited to the texts they were able to access, which necessarily shaped their output. Interestingly, in the case of Andrew Wise, evidence from his publication patterns points to a possible patronage network between Wise as a publisher, George Carey, second Baron Hunsdon, as a literary and theatrical patron, and the Chamberlain's Men as a repertory company that was patronized by George Carey from 1596 to 1603.¹⁷ As Sonia Massai has shown, Wise almost exclusively published texts by three writers under the direct patronage of George Carey, namely Thomas Nashe, Thomas Playfere, and Shakespeare, as the leading dramatist of the Chamberlain's Men.¹⁸ This kind of patronage link is relatively rare in publishers' outputs, and suggests that

¹⁷ George Carey became the patron of the Chamberlain's Men in July 1596, upon the death of his father, Henry Carey, first Baron Hunsdon and Lord Chamberlain, who had been the company's patron since its formation in 1594. For the first year of George's patronage, the company's name reverted to Lord Hunsdon's Men, as the office of the Lord Chamberlain had passed to William Brooke, Baron Cobham. Following George's later investiture with the chamberlainship in April 1597, the company regained its title as the Chamberlain's Men.

¹⁸ Sonia Massai, 'Shakespeare, Text and Paratext,' *Shakespeare Survey* 62 (2009), 1-11; p. 6.

a connection between Wise, George Carey, and the Chamberlain's Men may have motivated Wise's selection of texts for publication and determined their availability to him as a publisher.

Wise's unique position as the only Elizabethan publisher to specialize exclusively in plays by Shakespeare (in addition to his non-dramatic publications) and to prioritize historical dramatizations had possible implications for the publication of other plays dealing with medieval monarchical history, therefore shaping the corpus of extant texts from the commercial theatres. Thomas Millington published second editions of *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* in 1600, potentially to capitalize on the phenomenal success of Wise's quartos with readers. Similarly, Thomas Creede published *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Scottish History of James IV* in 1598 (both of which had been previously entered in the Stationers' Register in 1594, but not printed), and John Oxenbridge released editions of *1* and *2 Edward IV* in both 1599 and 1600. While the treatment of historical subjects varies considerably between the texts, with a play such as *James IV* having only a slight connection to any historical accounts, it is notable that the titles and title-page descriptions of these editions draw attention to their depiction of historical events and battles, establishing a marketing parallel with the Wise editions.¹⁹

As these patterns suggest, plays were actively selected for publication according to the specialisms, connections, and strategies of stationers, which indicates that the survival and transmission of plays from the professional stages were neither arbitrary nor representative. Largely owing to Wise's publications, Shakespeare was the most published commercial

¹⁹ For example, the title page for *1* and *2 Edward IV* embellishes the plays' description as it was recorded in the Stationers' Register on 28 August 1599 with the addition 'Likewise the besieging of London, by the bastarde Falconbridge, and the valiant defence of the same by the Lord Maior and the Cittizens'. Thomas Heywood, *The First and Second partes of King Edward the Fourth* (1599), A1r.

dramatist by 1600 and a majority of his printed plays demonstrate a preference for the conflicts and debates surrounding the Wars of the Roses. However, these patterns are not reflected in the wider performance repertoires of either the Chamberlain's Men or other theatrical companies. Evidence for plays in performance reveals a wider range of subject matter and greater variety in approach. As opposed to centring on medieval English history, as in Shakespeare's printed plays and other non-dramatic texts published at this time, the commercial stage witnessed a profusion of historical dramatizations that was not clearly related to print patterns and the narrower historiographical focus of published works, a significant factor in understanding the range and definition of 'history' in relation to early modern plays. Henslowe's *Diary* indicates that a considerable number of now 'lost' plays dramatized, from the evidence of their titles and records, legendary British history, classical history, biblical history, and foreign history – all of which are either unrepresented or under-represented in print at this time.²⁰ These lost plays have been overlooked by dominant critical narratives of the 'history play', which tend to define the genre and chart its development in parallel with Shakespeare's extant dramatic output and, in particular, by Wise's quartos.²¹

²⁰ Consider, for example, the references in Henslowe's *Diary* to lost plays that, from the evidence of their titles, dramatized early British history, none of which were published: 'Chinon of England' (January 1596; f. 14r-15v, 21v, 25r), 'Vortigern' (December 1596; f. 22v, 25v, 26r, 95r); 'Uther Pendragon' (April 1597; f. 26v-27r), 'The Conquest of Brute' by Chettle and Day (July 1598; f. 49r-52v), 'Arthur King of England' by Hathaway (April 1598; f. 45v-46r), 'Mulmutius Dunwallow' by William Rankins (October 1598; f. 50r), 'Brute Greenshield' (March 1599; f. 54r), and 'Ferrex and Porrex' by Haughton (March 1600; f. 68r-69r): R.A. Foakes (ed.), *Henslowe's Diary*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2002). For a discussion of lost plays from the late 1590s featuring the legend of Brutus, see Misha Teramura, 'Brute Parts: From Troy to Britain at the Rose, 1595-1600', in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, ed. by David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Basingstoke, 2014), 127-47.

²¹ See, for example, Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (London, 1990) and Ralf Hertel, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play: Performing National Identity* (Farnham, 2014).

Supposing a direct correlation between stage and print success ignores the fact that these two environments had different audiences and agendas. Although prominent on the London bookstalls, the plays Wise published represent only a small fraction of what would have been performed on stage, and, as Holger Syme points out in relation to archival absences, ‘the danger lies in assuming that everything that was valued and broadly influential has survived and that the literary development of early modern drama was largely a print phenomenon, with trajectories of influence dominated by published plays.’²² While focusing on extant texts is inevitable and justifiable to a certain degree, evidence from performance accounts and records reveals a significant difference between published plays and theatrical repertoires, and, in considering the dramatization of historical subject matter, a more expansive range of histories were prominently (and profitably) featured in the commercial theatres. As opposed to playbook publication being representative of theatrical patterns, it can be seen, instead, as a motivated process of careful selection that connects with wider literary trends, becoming a signifier of the plays’ literary identity as distinct from their performance existence. Far from being a self-contained example of a successful publishing venture, the Wise quartos highlight the importance of exploring the strategies and influences, including non-dramatic publication patterns and patronage connections, that underlie the selection of certain plays for publication and the effect this selection can have on wider issues of play survival and repertory studies.

²² Holger Syme, ‘The Meaning of Success: Stories of 1594 and Its Aftermath,’ *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61:4 (2010), 490-525; pp. 519, 524.

Between the signs of the Angel and the White Greyhound: The significance of paratextual attribution

During the 1590s, as Lukas Erne observes, the majority of professional plays were published anonymously, with paratextual attributions to authors appearing infrequently.²³ In 1598, Shakespeare's name was first presented – unambiguously – on the title pages of playbooks in the second editions of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, published by Wise, and the first extant edition of *Love's Labour's Lost*, published by Cuthbert Burby.²⁴ Within one year, Shakespeare was the most attributed professional dramatist in print, with five title-page references to his authorship by 1599, and nine by 1600.²⁵ As a first edition, *Love's Labour's Lost* may appear to warrant particular attention, but the reprinted quartos published by Wise point to a more developed, consistent, and specific strategy in their paratextual attributions than Burby's edition. This concentration in attribution again relates to Wise's business location in Paul's Churchyard, and can be seen as part of an effort to elevate the status of commercial drama and advertise Shakespeare's connection to a powerful literary and theatrical patron.

While Burby was one of the main stationers involved in the publication of commercial plays during the 1590s, responsible for playbooks such as *Orlando Furioso* (Q1 1594, Q2 1599), *Mother Bombie* (Q1 1594, Q2 1598), *The Cobbler's Prophecy* (Q1 1594), *The Taming of a Shrew* (Q1 1594, Q2 1596), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Q2 1599), his dramatic publications do not prioritize authorial attributions, unlike Wise's quartos. Aside from *Love's Labour's Lost*, Burby's only other play to contain a title-page attribution is *The Cobbler's Prophecy* (to

²³ Lukas Erne, 'The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print', *Shakespeare Survey* 62 (2009), 12-29; pp. 26-7.

²⁴ *Lochrine*, published in 1595, contains a title-page attribution to 'W.S.', which could be taken to suggest Shakespeare, although the ascription is far from unambiguous and does not convey or advertise the same clarity of authorship as the editions from 1598.

²⁵ Erne, 'The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print', pp. 26-7.

‘Robert Wilson, Gent.’), and significantly, the full attribution in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* reads ‘Newly corrected and augmented | By W. Shakespeare’, which implicitly aligns Shakespeare’s name, through the spacing and phrasing of the attribution, with the processes of correction and expansion, rather than initial authorship.²⁶

Wise, on the other hand, exclusively published plays by Shakespeare, which, from 1598 onwards, carried title-page attributions. Regardless of whether it was Burby’s edition of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (or its antecedent) or one of Wise’s reprints that first appeared on bookstalls with a paratextual attribution in 1598, it is Wise’s publication practices that are especially significant, owing to their relative consistency, which also distinguishes Wise from the other individuals who may have influenced the inclusion of paratextual attributions. Tiffany Stern has suggested that title pages resembled the playbills that were used to advertise theatrical performances and drew on their content, phrasing, and layout, which raises the possibility that dramatists and companies could have encouraged the inclusion of authorial paratexts through a parallel usage on playbills.²⁷ Indeed, the title pages of playbooks were a site of collaborative writing, with a play’s title usually deriving from the manuscript, the imprint details coming from the publisher, and the other title-page descriptions (including attributions) occupying an ambiguous space in terms of agency (and possibly reflecting the influence of playbills in their composition). However, in the case of the Shakespearian attributions at the end of the sixteenth century, the greatest consistency appears when Wise is involved as the publisher. As discussed in connection to Burby, other plays by Shakespeare that were published by different stationers do not contain the same regularity in attribution, which implies that Wise occupied a key role

²⁶ Robert Wilson, *The Cobbler’s Prophecy* (1594), A2r; *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (1598), A1r.

²⁷ Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 36-62.

in the incorporation of authorial attributions and may have been influenced by a publishing network involving himself, George Carey, and Shakespeare.

While Wise's first editions of *Richard II* and *Richard III* in 1597 do not contain any attributions, suggesting that the marketability of Shakespeare's name was not immediately apparent and corresponding to the inconsistent appearance of other dramatists' names on playbook title pages, Wise's editions from 1598 onwards regularly carry the attribution 'By William Shakespeare'.²⁸ This development marks a shift in the status and importance of Shakespeare's name in relation to his dramatic works, which is further signalled by the first appearance of his name in the Stationers' Register on 23 August 1600. Wise was again involved in this introduction. The inclusion of Shakespeare's name is part of Wise and Aspley's joint entry for *2 Henry IV* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and contains a clear declaration of Shakespeare's authorship: 'Wrytten by mr Shakespere'.²⁹

The one exception in relation to Wise's attribution practices concerns the publication of *I Henry IV*. Wise likely published the (undated) first edition in 1598, as he entered the play in the Stationers' Register on 25 February 1598 (providing the *terminus a quo*) and published the second edition later in 1598 (giving the *terminus ad quem*). The first edition survives in one sheet only (C1-4v), with the title page no longer extant, which makes it impossible to determine conclusively the play's original history of attribution. The title page of the second edition in

²⁸ Of Wise's play editions, *Richard II* Q2 (1598) and Q3 (1598); *Richard III* Q2 (1598) and Q3 (1602); *I Henry IV* Q3 (1599); *2 Henry IV* Q1 (1600), and *Much Ado About Nothing* Q1 (1600) contain attributions to Shakespeare.

²⁹ The full entry, made out to Wise and Aspley, reads: 'Two bookes. the one called: Muche a Doo about nothinge. Th[e] other the second p[ar]te of the history of kinge Henry the iiijth w[i]th the humours of S[i]r John Ffallstaff: Wrytten by mr Shakespere.' The Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers: Liber C, f. 63v. Available through *Shakespeare Documented* <<http://www.shakespearedocumented.org>>.

1598 contains no reference to Shakespeare or the Chamberlain's Men, while the third edition, published by Wise in 1599, claims the play was 'Newly corrected by W. Shake-speare'.³⁰ Although it is possible that the first two editions of *I Henry IV* were actually printed earlier in 1598 than the second quartos of *Richard II* and *Richard III* (containing the first attributions), and therefore not constituting an exception to the overarching patterns described, the phrasing on the 1599 title page of *I Henry IV* and the absence of any references to the Chamberlain's Men on subsequent editions potentially indicate a connection to the Oldcastle controversy. While the title pages of all the extant editions encourage recollection of the association between Falstaff and the Cobham family, notably by drawing attention to this character in their paratexts, the 1598 title page perhaps strategically refrains from mentioning those involved in the offence, namely Shakespeare and George Carey's company. The 1599 title page introduces Shakespeare as a corrector, in contrast to the assertive claims of authorship on the other Wise quartos, suggesting an effort to curtail attributive claims and emphasize the play's 'corrected' state. Indeed, this new incorporation of Shakespeare as a corrector in the third edition is particularly striking as the changes to the play – specifically the renaming of the character Sir John Oldcastle as Falstaff – were made in the copy for the first edition (see C3v-4v). *I Henry IV*'s sequence of publication displays a continuing negotiation of the Oldcastle debacle, with the first edition containing the renamed character, the second edition eschewing any reference to Shakespeare or the company, and the third edition belatedly introducing Shakespeare as a corrector.

This possible marketing sensitivity in relation to an incident of play censorship supports the previously proposed connection between Wise and the Chamberlain's Men. Moreover, Wise's other title pages after 1598 consistently align Shakespeare's name with attributions to the

³⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Historie of Henrie the Fovrth* (1599), A1r.

Chamberlain's Men and, by extension, to the company's patron, George Carey. This title-page link between dramatist, theatrical company, and patron was relatively uncommon at this stage in the publication of professional plays. The earliest examples come from 1594 in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Thomas Lodge's *Wounds of Civil War*, Marlowe and Nashe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and Marlowe's *Edward II*. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, for example, the title page contains the attribution 'As it was plaid by her Maiesties seruants' and 'Made by Robert Greene Maister of Arts', linking, through the *mise en page*, Greene with Queen Elizabeth's Men, and by extension, with Elizabeth I as the company's titular theatrical patron.³¹ All of these title pages also contain assertions of their dramatists' gentlemanly status or university education, suggesting an attempt to elevate the status and marketability of commercial playbooks through these connections. In his second editions of *Richard II* and *Richard III* in 1598, Wise was the first publisher to connect Shakespeare's name with a theatrical company in print, and in doing so, advertise an association with an influential aristocratic patron. Burby's 1598 edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* does not refer to the Chamberlain's Men, and after the 1594 texts (all of which were published by different stationers), Wise's playbooks are the first to draw attention to a dramatist and patron in their paratexts, suggesting a marketing and positioning strategy that aligns the plays with the interests and cachet of George Carey.³²

³¹ Robert Greene, *The Honorable Historie of Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay* (1594), A2r. See Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean's *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 25-9 for a discussion of how the Queen's Men, through their name, patron, and court connections, presented an opportunity for carrying royal influence throughout the country.

³² A considerable number of the wider publications dedicated to George Carey involve military or historical subject matter, suggesting contemporaries associated him with these interests, and making Wise's investment in Shakespeare's English histories appear attuned to Carey's reputation. See the dedications in Thomas Churchyard's *A pleasant discourse of court and wars* (1596), Marin Barleti's *Historie of George Castriot* (1596), and Giles Fletcher's *Policy of the Turkish Empire* (1597).

The presentation of the Wise quartos and their title-page attributions highlight the overlap between patronage and commercial considerations in the transmission of plays, indicating a synergetic relationship between these two factors, which is further revealed through Wise's bookshop location at the Sign of the Angel and the publication patterns of his neighbouring stationers at the White Greyhound in Paul's Cross Churchyard. During the late 1590s, this area witnessed the greatest concentration of Shakespearian wholesale in London and emerged as the locus for Shakespearian paratextual attribution, which in all cases connected Shakespeare with an aristocratic patron.

Before 1598, Shakespeare's name had only been associated in print with his two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, first published in 1593 and 1594 respectively, and containing signed dedications by Shakespeare to his patron, Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton. These editions were printed by Richard Field for John Harrison and proved hugely successful with readers, judging by the scarcity of extant copies (suggesting they were, quite literally, read to destruction by their early readers), and their numerous subsequent editions.³³ Harrison published reprints of *Venus and Adonis* in 1594, 1595(?), and 1596, and *Lucrece* in 1598 and twice in 1600.³⁴ William Leake was responsible for two further editions of *Venus and Adonis* in 1599.³⁵ Significantly, all of these editions (with the exception of Harrison's 1598 and 1600 reprints of *Lucrece*) were offered for wholesale at

³³ Colin Burrow suggests there were further editions of *Venus and Adonis*, which were 'completely destroyed by their eager consumers'. See William Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. by Colin Burrow (Oxford, 2002), p. 7.

³⁴ The title page of the third edition of *Venus and Adonis* is no longer extant. Conjectured date of publication is taken from the ESTC.

³⁵ Richard Field initially entered *Venus and Adonis* in the Stationers' Register on 18 April 1593, before he transferred his rights to John Harrison on 25 June 1594, who then published a further three editions between 1594 and 1596, before transferring ownership to William Leake on 25 June 1596. *Lucrece* was first entered to Harrison on 9 May 1594, but, unlike *Venus and Adonis*, Harrison retained his rights to the poem.

the Sign of the White Greyhound, just three doors (or about twenty feet) away from Wise's shop in Paul's Cross.³⁶ With the editions of the narrative poems and seven of Wise's playbooks advertising Shakespeare's authorship and patronage connections, this small section of Paul's Churchyard between the signs of the Angel and the White Greyhound became a focal point for Shakespearian wholesale and paratextual attribution in London at the end of the sixteenth century. Wise's exclusive focus on Shakespeare's plays and his later inclusion of authorial attributions in the second editions of *Richard II* and *Richard III* were possibly shaped by the earlier strategies of the narrative poems and their ongoing success with readers. Indeed, this area of London could have been associated in the minds of stationers and readers with the publication of Shakespeare's dramatic and non-dramatic works, as no other part of London exhibited a similar concentration at this time.

This claim of a reciprocal connection between Shakespeare's dramatic and non-dramatic texts is further supported by the publication of *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599. Until this time, Shakespeare's name had only appeared on the title pages of his printed *playbooks*; the narrative poems contained signed dedications, which was common practice with poetic collections.³⁷ However, in 1599, the second edition of *The Passionate Pilgrim* became the first non-dramatic text attributed to Shakespeare on its title page, which describes the collection as 'By W. Shakespeare'.³⁸ Interestingly, this octavo collection of poems (only five of which are by

³⁶ Leake took over Harrison's premises at the White Greyhound in 1596, and Harrison moved to the nearby Greyhound on Paternoster Row, taking with him the publication rights to *Lucrece*. For a map of the area, see Blayney, *The Bookshops in Paul's Cross Churchyard*, p. 76.

³⁷ Colin Burrow observes that (in relation to the narrative poems) 'it was quite usual in this period for authors' names to be attached to the dedicatory epistles rather than appearing on the title-pages'. See Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, p. 6.

³⁸ *The Passionate Pilgrime* (1599), A2r. No copies of the title page for the first edition of *The Passionate Pilgrim* are extant. This edition was probably also published in 1599, or possibly in late 1598, after the printer of the volume, Thomas Judson, set up his press in September 1598. See Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, p. 74.

Shakespeare) was printed for William Jaggard and William Leake, and offered for wholesale, along with Shakespeare's narrative poems, at the White Greyhound.³⁹ Given the geographical proximity of the bookshops, *The Passionate Pilgrim's* title-page attribution was likely influenced by the Wise quartos and their success with readers, thus furthering the link between these two bookshops and their stationers. While Wise's investments can be primarily associated with the evidence for a publication network involving Wise, George Carey, and the Chamberlain's Men, the surrounding bookshops also shaped his venture, and reciprocally, Wise's editions impacted neighbouring publishers, particularly in relation to title-page attributions.

The importance of bookshop locations becomes even more apparent when considering, as Stern has argued, that printed title pages were used as advertisements and were posted around the bookstalls in London.⁴⁰ These extracted title pages announced the availability of specific works for individual or wholesale purchase from a given stationer, and Paul's Churchyard, as the centre of the London book trade, was a prominent place in which to view these advertisements, as described by Thomas Campion in his address 'The Writer to his Booke' from *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (also published by Wise in 1602):⁴¹

Whether thus hasts my little booke so fast?
To Paules Churchyard; what in those cels to stand,
With one leafe like a riders cloke put vp
To catch a termer?

The title page 'leafe like a riders cloke put vp' was designed to attract prospective buyers and appeal to their literary interests. The inclusion of Shakespeare's name on Wise's title pages

³⁹ Of the twenty poems in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, those attributable to Shakespeare are numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, and 16. See Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, p. 76.

⁴⁰ Stern, *Documents of Performance*, pp. 36-62.

⁴¹ Thomas Campion, *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602), B4v.

represents, as Joseph Loewenstein describes, ‘the process by which authorship was converted into a new form of economic agency’, investing Shakespeare’s position as a dramatist for the professional stage with increasing importance.⁴² During the late 1590s, the area between the signs of the Angel and the White Greyhound must have regularly featured a considerable number of title pages advertising works by ‘Shakespeare’ (including *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *1* and *2 Henry IV*, and *The Passionate Pilgrim*, all with Shakespearian attributions), as well as the advertisements for *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, which did not contain Shakespeare’s name, but which were connected to Shakespeare through the signed dedications that were part of the complete texts. This geographical concentration would have encouraged an association between Shakespeare as a poet and as a dramatist for the stage, shaping the literary reputation and characteristics of this part of Paul’s Churchyard.

By 1600, the impact of Wise’s paratexts, made more significant through the success of these editions with readers, can be seen through the widespread incorporation of Shakespearian title-page attributions, as they started to appear regularly in playbooks published by other stationers. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (published in 1600 for Thomas Fisher), *The Merchant of Venice* (published in 1600 for Thomas Hayes), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (published in 1602 for Arthur Johnson) and *Hamlet* (published in 1603 for Nicholas Ling and John Trundle) all contain the title-page attribution ‘By William Shakespeare’.⁴³ Along with being the most published commercial dramatist at the end of the sixteenth century (based on edition numbers), Shakespeare was also the most attributed: nine playbook editions advertised his authorship on

⁴² Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 25.

⁴³ The Stationers’ Register entries for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (8 October 1600) and *The Merchant of Venice* (28 October 1600, following its initial entry on 22 July 1598) were recorded shortly after Wise and Aspley’s joint entry on 23 August 1600, which contained the first reference to Shakespeare in the Register. Interestingly, these later entries do not refer to Shakespeare, which further suggest the singularity and significance of Wise’s attribution project.

their title pages by 1600. In comparison, as Erne points out, Robert Greene was the second most attributed dramatist at this time, with only five playbook editions displaying his name on their title pages.⁴⁴

At the end of the sixteenth century, compilers of poetic miscellanies and commonplace books started to extract quotations from Shakespeare's plays and poetry, presenting them alongside passages from writers such as Edmund Spenser, which suggests that readers and publishers were associating Shakespeare's plays with works of an established 'literary' status.⁴⁵ William Scott's manuscript treatise, *The Modell of Poesy* (c.1599), incorporates references to *Lucrece* and *Richard II*, together with extracts from classical and English authors, including Philip Sidney, a development in Shakespeare's literary status that Gavin Alexander describes as 'unprecedented'.⁴⁶ Other readers and collectors singled out Shakespeare's plays from amongst other dramatists, as shown by an inventory list (1627) from the library of Lady Frances Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater, which specifies a bound volume containing 'Diuers Playes by Shakespeare 1602', while other play volumes recorded in the collection have no authorial designations.⁴⁷

Similarly, the miscellanies published under the auspices of John Bodenham, specifically *Belvedere, or The Garden of the Muses* (1600), and *Englands Parnassus* (1600), contain a significant number of extracts from Shakespeare's plays, the majority of which come from Wise's quarto editions.⁴⁸ *Englands Parnassus* identifies authors throughout (although not

⁴⁴ Erne, 'The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print', p.27.

⁴⁵ For defining Shakespeare as a 'literary' dramatist and its implications, see Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge, 2007).

⁴⁶ William Scott, *The Model of Poesy*, ed. by Gavin Alexander (Cambridge, 2013), p. lxi.

⁴⁷ As discussed by Erne in 'The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print', p.15.

⁴⁸ *Belvedere* contains forty-seven quotations from *Richard II*, thirteen from *Richard III*, thirteen from *Romeo and Juliet*, ten from *The True Tragedy*, five from *Love's Labour's Lost*,

always correctly), placing, for example, a quotation from *Richard II* ('If Angels fight | Weake men must fall, for heauen stil gards the right') immediately before an extract from Daniel's closet play, *Cleopatra* (first published in 1594), with such juxtapositions encouraging interpretative and literary connections between the writers.⁴⁹ *Bel-vedere* presents shorter quotations without identifying the authors or texts, but the prefatory address, 'To the Reader', lists Shakespeare alongside other prominent English poets, including Spenser and Daniel, as well as 'Honourable' and 'noble personages', including Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, Philip Sidney, and Walter Raleigh.⁵⁰ Similarly, Francis Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (1598) favourably compares English writers to Greek, Latin, and Italian poets, describing the 'English tongue [as] mightily enriched and gorgeously inuested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments by Sir Philip Sidney, Spencer, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlow, and Chapman'. Meres identifies Shakespeare as the best for comedy and tragedy, making specific reference to 'his Richard the 2, Richard the 3, Henry the 4, King Iohn, Titus Andronicus, and his Romeo and Juliet'.⁵¹ The wider significance of Wise's quartos can be detected through these miscellanies and collections, which often prioritize the Wise editions in their selection of quotations and, in doing so, place Shakespeare as a professional dramatist alongside celebrated classical and English poets.

and one from *1 Henry IV*. *Englands Parnassus* includes thirteen quotations from *Romeo and Juliet*, seven from *Richard II*, five from *Richard III*, three from *Love's Labour's Lost*, and two from *1 Henry IV*. Between the two texts, sixty-one quotations are extracted from Wise's editions, while forty-four are taken from plays published by other stationers. Quotation statistics are drawn from Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 59:4 (2008), 371-420; p. 395. See also Peter Stallybrass and Roger Chartier, 'Reading and Authorship: The Circulation of Shakespeare, 1590-1619' in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. by Andrew Murphy (Oxford, 2007), pp. 35-56.

⁴⁹ Robert Allott, *Englands Parnassus: or the choysest flowers of our moderne poets* (1600), B2r.

⁵⁰ John Bodenham and Anthony Munday, *Bel-vedere, or The Garden of the Muses* (1600), A4v-A5v.

⁵¹ Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia: Wits treasury being the second part of Wits common wealth* (1598), Nn4r, Oo2r.

While Shakespeare's position as a published and marketable writer perhaps seemed assured at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it has regularly puzzled critics that patterns in Shakespearian playbook publication decline significantly after 1603. Between 1604 and 1623, only four first editions of plays by Shakespeare were printed, a considerable reduction in frequency from Elizabethan publication patterns.⁵² Changes in the literary landscape of Paul's Cross and the patronage network between Wise, George Carey, and the Chamberlain's Men offer a possible explanation, again drawing attention to the importance of looking collectively at commercial and patronage influences in publication. In 1603, Andrew Wise stopped publishing and disappeared from historical records; George Carey, patron of the Chamberlain's Men and Wise's other writers, died; and the geographical centre for Shakespearian wholesale between the Angel and the White Greyhound dissipated. Matthew Law at the Sign of the Fox near St Austin's Gate (in the southeast corner of St Paul's) received the rights to Shakespeare's history plays from Wise, while John Harrison had moved to Paternoster Row in 1596. Only William Leake, who retained the rights to *Lucrece* and *The Passionate Pilgrim*, remained in Paul's Cross, after moving premises to the Sign of the Holy Ghost in 1602. The prior concentration of Shakespearian publication and wholesale within a spatial range of approximately twenty feet was ultimately a short-lived (and yet highly significant) enterprise that did not continue into the Jacobean period.⁵³ James I became the patron of the renamed King's Men, and different stationers took over the publication of Shakespeare's plays. The previously prominent patronage links and geographical connections that may have encouraged rapid playbook publication in the late 1590s were no longer in play.

⁵² Of Shakespeare's plays, only *King Lear* (1608), *Troilus and Cressida* (1609), *Pericles* (1609) and *Othello* (1622) were published in single-text first editions between 1604 and 1623.

⁵³ Blayney, *The Bookshops in Paul's Cross Churchyard*, p. 18.

Conclusions

Far from having either limited consequential agency in the publication of plays, or merely contributing ineptly or destructively to the process (a view that continues to prevail), publishers, such as Wise, were actively involved in selecting plays for publication and influencing their presentation as printed playbooks. Wise is particularly significant as the first publisher to concentrate exclusively on plays by Shakespeare and incorporate regular paratextual attributions, as well as specializing in a narrow group of plays that dramatize similar historical material. Largely as a result of these editions, Shakespeare became the most published and most attributed professional dramatist by the end of the sixteenth century, a development which shaped his reputation as a poet and playwright for the stage, and possibly paved the way for other dramatists to establish a prominent and distinctive identity in print. Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*, for example, was published by William Holme in 1600 'As it was first composed by the Author B.I. | Containing more than hath been Publickely Spoken or Acted,' and marks the beginning of Jonson's regular claims of authorship and ownership in relation to his dramatic texts.⁵⁴

This article has suggested that, in the selection of plays and incorporation of paratextual attributions, Wise was influenced by both a patronage connection to George Carey and the Chamberlain's Men, and the position of his business within the London book trade, with the non-dramatic publication patterns of neighbouring stationers (including Waterson's editions of Daniel's *Civil Wars*, and Harrison's editions of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*) encouraging his investment in Shakespeare's history plays. While the nature of extant records and texts, and

⁵⁴ Ben Jonson, *The Comicall Satyre of Every Man Out of His Humour* (1600), A1r. As Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass point out, this was also the first professional play to be printed with commonplace markers. See 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays', p. 395.

the multiplicity of agents involved in the transmission process make it impossible to assert conclusively the factors controlling the selection and presentation of playbooks, it is nevertheless critical to recognize the important role played by stationers in influencing play survival and reception, and in shaping our understanding of the wider performance repertoires of theatrical companies.